

The following information is on service members from the Long Beach-Torrance region killed in Iraq-related incidents the past 12 months. Victims either lived in or near the 55th Assembly District or had family members nearby. Details were provided by accredited news sources and funeral homes.

For more, contact Ray Sotero, press secretary for Asm. Jenny Oropeza, sponsor of the annual Sept. 11 Day of Remembrance and Community Service, at (916) 319-2055, pager 916 855-9677; or Sharon Weissman, Oropeza's chief of staff, at (310) 518-3324.

Sgt. 1st Class Randy D. Collins



Age: 36
Hometown: Long Beach, CA
Date of Death: 5/24/2005
Incident: Mosul, Iraq
Location:

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Branch of Army
Military:
Rank: Sgt. 1st Class
Unit: 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment



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■ *Tribute by*
JOE DAVIS

Randy Collins' wife had been picking out a wedding dress. The couple wed in a civil service before he left for Iraq, but they were planning a church service for December, when Collins was expected home for one of his first family holiday visits since he joined the Army 17 years ago. "He won't be back no more," said his mother, Margarette Miller. "All his adult life he had been away in the service and we'd be waiting for Christmas to come because he would be coming home." Collins, 36, of Long Beach, Calif., died May 24 at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., of wounds from a mortar attack in Mosul. He was based at Fort Irwin. The sixth of nine children, Collins wanted to join the Army from a young age. He excelled in track and cross country in high school and joined the Army Junior ROTC. After he graduated in 1987, Collins joined the Army Reserves and then went on active duty when he couldn't find a civilian job. He coached youth basketball and loved to sing in the church choir. He is survived by his wife, Roxanne, and two children, Princess Jazmine and Kevin.

(SOURCE: ASSOCIATED PRESS)

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Capt. Sean L. Brock



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Age: 29
Hometown: Redondo Beach, CA
Date of Death: 2/2/2005
Incident: Anbar province, Iraq
Location:

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Branch of: Marines
Military:
Rank: Capt.
Unit: Headquarters Battalion,
Marine Corps Base Butler

The last time Sean L. Brock spoke to his mother from Iraq, he told her he was worried because it was eerily quiet and "when it gets quiet like that, something happens." Brock, 29, of Redondo Beach, Calif., died Feb. 2 from shrapnel wounds he sustained in Anbar province. He was based at Okinawa, Japan. Brock had a bachelor's degree in political science and a master's degree in administration. In addition, he was working on a doctorate in public policy and administration and a second master's in international relations. "He became a motivator of people," said his uncle, the Rev. Fred Biby. "He literally not only accomplished his own dreams, but he pulled them out of people." "He was able to teach to his fellow Marines and reach out to them and give them a little bit of the knowledge he had," said Maribel Duenas, evaluations coordinator at Central Texas College, where Brock taught classes. Brock was a man who loved animals, be they the family cats or his pet iguana. Four white homing pigeons were release at his funeral. He is survived by his wife, Navy Lt. Nurse Heather Brock.

(SOURCE: ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Obituary also posted in:

- [Los Angeles Times](#)

Pfc. Stephen A. Castellano



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Age: 20
Hometown: Long Beach, CA
Date of Death: 1/28/2005
Incident: Mosul, Iraq
Location:

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Branch of: Army
Military:
Rank: Pfc.
Unit: 1st Battalion, 14th
Infantry Regiment, 25th
Infantry Division (Light)

Stephen A. Castellano's family knew he'd always be fighting the good fight, whether it was something as simple as a personal disagreement or as difficult as the defense of an entire nation. "Stephen gave his life protecting the most basic rights of a formerly oppressed people; the right to live in freedom and their right to express that freedom by exercising the right to participate in the formation of the government that will ultimately rule over them," his parents said in a statement. Castellano, 20, of Long Beach, Calif., died Jan. 28, just four days shy of his 21st birthday, of a non-combat related injury in Mosul. He was based at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii. Castellano joined the Army in February 2003, fresh from his high school graduation. His enlistment followed a family tradition of military service; his mother had been in the Navy and his father was a Marine. His mother, Susan Moncure, enjoyed the time they were able to spend together over the Thanksgiving holiday. "It was such a happy time," she said. "I'm trying to think of the happy times." He also is survived by his father, Paul Castellano.

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Spc. Edgar P. Daclan

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Age: 24
Hometown: Cypress, CA
Date of Death: 9/10/2004
Incident: Balad, Iraq
Location:

Branch of: Army
Military:
Rank: Spc.
Unit: 1st Battalion, 18th
Infantry, 1st Infantry
Division
Unit's Base: Schweinfurt, Germany

Spc. Edgar Daclan Jr., an immigrant from the Philippines, surprised his family by joining the Army when he was just one semester away from graduating from college with a degree in electrical engineering. Daclan, a 24-year-old medic, was killed by an explosive in Balad, Iraq on Sept. 10. He was based in Schweinfurt, Germany. "Wherever the troops were, that's where he was," said Iris Daclan, 26, his older sister. "He knew it was dangerous. I told him we were in a war, but he wanted to join. And his platoon commander told us that he never saw fear in his eyes." Daclan, the only boy of five siblings, moved to the United States in 1993. His tight-knit extended family lived in the Los Angeles suburb of Torrance. In 2002, he and three cousins moved to Cypress, Calif., where Edgar took on the role of the head of the household. "He decided to live with us so he could take care of us," Rashel Daclan, 23, recalls. "We had just moved here from the Philippines, and he cooked for us, picked us up from school and showed us around Orange County. He was really proud because he loved this country."

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Sgt. Anthony J. Davis



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Age: 22
Hometown: Long Beach, CA
Date of Death: 4/23/2005
Incident: Mosul, Iraq
Location:

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Branch of: Army
Military:
Rank: Sgt.
Unit: 1st Battalion, 24th
Infantry Regiment, 1st
Brigade, 25th Infantry
Division

Michell Davis met her future husband Anthony Davis Jr. when they were preteens, but she always knew he stood out in their tough neighborhood. While other kids thought about joining gangs, Davis wanted to become a police officer. "He didn't smoke cigarettes, he never drank alcohol and he was just strong in who he was," she said. "He would always make you smile." Davis, 22, of Long Beach, Calif., was killed April 23 when a car bomb detonated near his vehicle in Mosul, Iraq. He was based at Fort Lewis. Davis never got to meet his youngest daughter, Aniya, born two weeks after his deployment in October. The couple also had a 4-year-old daughter, Ah'lania. Davis enlisted in the Army after graduating from high school in 2001 and became a sniper. He hoped to become a police officer when his enlistment was up in two years. "We're proud of him because he was accomplishing what he'd set out to do by helping people and providing for us," Michell said. "He was always helping people."

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Spc. Sergio R. Diaz Varela

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Age: 21
Hometown: Lomita, CA
Date of Death: 11/24/2004
Incident: Ramadi, Iraq
Location:

Branch of: Army
Military:
Rank: Spc.
Unit: 1st Battalion, 503rd
Infantry Regiment, 2nd
Brigade Combat Team

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Sergio Diaz Varela was a Mexican immigrant who joined the Army to buy his mother a house. "All he wanted was to help his mother," neighbor Leticia Garibay said. "He was fighting for his mother." Diaz, 21, of Lomita, Calif., died Nov. 24 when a bomb exploded near his patrol vehicle in Ramadi, Iraq. He was stationed at Camp Howze, Korea. Diaz and his family moved to California from Guadalajara, Mexico, in the early 1990s. He and his mother, Maria, went back to Mexico a few years later, but he decided to return when he was a junior high school student to learn English. He lived with his father, Sergio Sr. A hard-working student, Diaz played basketball in high school and tinkered with his gray Mustang. Neighbors said Diaz often talked about his desire to buy a house for his mother in Guadalajara. "He was a quiet type of guy," said Nelson Sanchez, who went to school with him. "Wouldn't mess with anybody."

(SOURCE: ASSOCIATED PRESS)

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Pvt. Ernesto R. Guerra

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Age: 20
Hometown: Long Beach, CA
Date of Death: 7/29/2005
Incident: Baghdad
Location:

Branch of: Army
Military:
Rank: Pvt.
Unit: 43rd Brigade Troops
Battalion, 3rd Infantry
Division

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From Obituary:

Ernie returned to God July 29, 2005 following an accident while serving as a soldier in Baghdad, Iraq. Always a devoted son, brother and friend, Ernie is remembered for his warm smile, positive outlook and constant concern for others. He was the man of the house- caring for his mother, teaching his brother to tie shoes, perform skateboard tricks and everything in between. He loved sports- especially soccer. He excelled in ROTC at Cabrillo H.S. and joined the US Army to help himself, his family and others. In June, he was promoted to Pvt. E-2. He enjoyed watching people and as a child often sat on the doorstep eating bread and watching people walk by.

He treasured special times with his grandfather in Mexico but was grateful for opportunities in the US. Ernie will be missed by all. Survived by his mother Maria Valadez; brothers Juan Anguiano and Christian Contreras. Preceded in death by his father, Camerino. (Remains interred with full military honors in San Francisco del Rincon, Mexico).

Spc. Paul T. Nakamura



Age: 21
Hometown: Santa Fe Springs, CA
Date of Death: 6/19/2003
Incident: Iskandariyah, Iraq
Location:

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Branch of: Army
Military:
Rank: Spc.
Unit: 437th Medical Company
Unit's Base: Riverside, Calif.

His father had concerns, but Spc. Paul T. Nakamura was intent on joining the Army Reserves. His motivation: patriotism. "One day he said, 'Mom, Dad, I'm so proud I was born in the United States,' " said his mother, Yoko, of Santa Fe Springs, Calif. Nakamura, 21, was killed June 19 when the ambulance he was in was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade in Iraq. He was stationed with the 437th Medical Company, based in Riverside, Calif. Nakamura was a lifeguard who had taught swimming since he was 17 and belonged to the high school water polo team, said his sister, Pearl Nakamura. Family members recalled him as a rascal and a risk-taker. "You would tell him not to do something, and he would do it anyway," his sister said. On Father's Day, the family spoke with him for the last time. "The first thing he told me was that he had showered and had steak for dinner _ we know he was lying," said his father, Paul. "He didn't want us to worry."

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